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SONG OF DEBORAH

*In the Light of Linguistic, Historical,  
and Archaeological Analysis*

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## SONG OF DEBORAH

*In the Light of Linguistic, Historical,  
and Archaeological Analysis*

*\*\* by \*\**

Abram S. Kotsuji

### INTRODUCTION

When Moses died on Mt. Peor in sight of the Promised Land, young Joshua, his servant, was found right at his side already a fully grown-up warrior and commander. Of him, what was required, was that authority of leadership in the way of Yahweh, which Moses possessed at its highest degree, and to hear the voice of Yahweh, "Be strong and of good courage." Following the account of the conquest and division of the land under Joshua we have in our Hebrew Canon a book traditionally called JUDGES. The book in the present form had undergone redactions <sup>than</sup> more <sup>than</sup> once. Roughly speaking, there are three main factors in the formation of the book. In the first place, the main and the central part (2:6-16:31) is found fitted into a framework of a writer (D) imbued with the ideas of the Book of Deuteronomy. It is a work of edification: the trouble in Israel is



explained to be from apostacy. So we have the typical phraseology of D:-"And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh.....and Yahweh sold them into the hand of.....children of Israel cried unto Yahweh,Yahweh raised them up a savior (יִשְׁעָא), and the land had rest (certain)years,etc." In the second place,there is discerned an unknown hand in the introduction(1:1-2:5) which is almost identical with the fragment scattered throughout the Book of Joshua(13:13,15:13-19,63;16:10;17:11-13),and is of very great value to the historian. It explicitly mentions that Israel's conquest of Canaan was at the outset by no means complete,but that many cities and great tracts of the country remained unsubdued. In the third place,one must not fail to distinguish an edition with extensive additions by the post-exilic priestly school(R). His hand is unmistakable especially in the last two chapters. In this book we find the Israelites settled in the midst of the Canaanites, and in a chronic state of warfare. But almost everywhere they failed to get control of the military and economic centers of the country. Neither the fertile plains nor the strongly fortified walled cities fell into their hands, for how could they compete with the iron chariots and the more advanced equipments of warfare of the Canaanites





in their bright morning of the iron age? Not in vain had Canaan been under Egyptian control and Hittite influence for centuries. The Israelites equalled only in mountain warfare an enemy who was superior in the military tactics of an old civilization. Therefore, they had to be satisfied with the pasture lands here and there and fields of rural populations in mountainous regions. In the book in hand we find them settled in the central highlands (Ephraim), but of course not without surprise attacks from time to time by the older inhabitants or by the fresh invaders from the east<sup>ern</sup> desert. It is evident that the stream of migration is still pushing in from the East. Between the two hostile forces Israel is in danger of being ground to pieces. The cleverest policy is to get mingled with the older inhabitants by intermarriage. But how could they help themselves when Yahweh is hostile to other gods? The only way left is treason and strategy; so followed Ehud when Benjamite was in pain of tributary to Eglon, king of Moab. Jericho, Bethel, and Ajalon; and first two of these came into their hands in this way. Though not so successful, treason played a noticeably important rôle in their making. And the recurrence of wars and dangers evoked not only<sup>a</sup> dauntless spirit but the religious enthusiasm of the race. War was necessary so far to Israel for the national discipline, like all other nations of the



world which played a conspicuous part in history. Midianites from the desert, Ammonites from beyond the Jordan, Philistines from the maritime plain, etc. - "these are the nations which Yahweh left, to prove Israel by them...to teach them war." It was Israel's firm belief that Yahweh went with them into battle and gave them victory. Their first history was "The Wars of Yahweh" and their war-cry was "The sword of Yahweh and the sword of Gideon." But after all nearly all the wars in the time of Judges were wars of defence, not of aggression. Moreover, the younger generations have gradually inclined to listen to the sensual music of the enervating Baal feasts rather than to the serious tales about the stern Yahweh. It seems that since the days of the heroic invasion of the country, a weak unwarlike spirit had overcome Israel. The comforts of peaceful rural life had succeeded the hard struggle for life's needs on the desert. Thus the old heroic spirit weakened. Yahweh was a strong, jealous, and thundering God; while Baal and Ashtart favored effeminate and sensual pleasures. In such a crisis, one strong blow would <sup>be</sup> enough <sup>to</sup> root out their existence. In the northern part of the country an aggressing power is menacing Israel; should there not arise some one great who will rouse up again the ebb of patriotism, they





would have had no other<sup>way</sup> than to perish. Then Deborah arose! "They chose new gods; then was war in the gates." Israel fought in fear with such poor weapons as they could find, so we read in the Song, "Was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?"

The Song of Deborah which occupies <sup>the</sup> whole of the fifth chapter of Judges is not only a most ancient bit of Hebrew literature and the oldest extant Hebrew song which is come down to us, but also is <sup>an</sup> invaluable witness to the history of the period. The religious temper and the political situation agree with what we know of the period of <sup>the</sup> Judges from elsewhere, while the antique poetic language may well be characteristic of the same date. The fragrance of patriotism and the zeal to Yahweh is spilling over from the rushing stream of spontaneous expressions. Hence, the authorship is generally ascribed to a contemporary, though not to Deborah. The original place may have been in some collection of Hebrew songs such as "The Book of Jashar" (Josh. 10:13; 2S. 1:18) or "The Book of the Wars of Yahweh" (Num. 21:14). As Moore says, it is a work of genius, and therefore a work of that highest art which is not studied and artificial, but spontaneous and inevitable. And it is "the greatest war-song of any age or nation" (Hutton). We should wonder and admire that such a great



and lofty spirit was moving among the tribes which till lately had been nomads pitching tents in the desert.

The record of the deliverance under the leadership of Deborah and the commandership of Barak appears first in prose(chap. 4), and then in poetical form(chap. 5), of which the latter is the older, written without doubt under the inspiration of the actual events. There are striking differences between the two versions, and they will naturally prove themselves of their relative antiquity. In the prose the oppressor of Israel is Jabin, king of Hazor, whose captain is Sisera; Deborah's home is in Mount Ephraim; only the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali are called forth to the battle. In the triumphal Ode there is no Jabin, Sisera being at the head of the allies; Deborah appears to have belonged to the tribe of Issachar; all the tribes around the Great Plain of Jezreel take part in the conflict; and the way of slaying Sisera is by Jael is not as that in the prose account; she slays while Sisera is standing and drinking. The discrepancies are partly due to the misunderstanding of the prose writer's attempt to combine the story of Sisera with that of Jabin, king of Hazor which is recorded in chap. 11:1-5 of Joshua, and partly due to the misunderstanding of the poetical expression in v. 26.

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The text suffered a great deal. Prof. Moore suggests that at this point the page was obliterated or rubbed, so that the early copyist was driven to make what sense he could make out of it. Greek Versions presuppose, on the whole, much the same text as we have. Therefore, the corruption must have begun before the translation. The restoration of the corrupt text is requiring of us the knowledge of the poetical usage of words in archaic Hebrew, and it will leave us with several possible presumptions enough to make us puzzle. As the text suffered a great deal, we can do nothing more with some passages than guess at the meaning, especially in the middle of the Song. In v. 8-15, while clauses here and there are plain enough, the whole is unintelligible. This is why we have superabundant translations given by a number of commentators. Yet the general implication is quite clear with unsuppressable connotation of a work of genius; the movement of the poem is straightforward and natural. It sets before us, first, the situation before the revolt; second, the rising of the tribes; third, the victory and its sequel with the death of Sisera. The three movements of the Song are headed by an opening strain of praises of Yahweh in his awful coming out of Sinai for the deliverance



of his people. The Song is doubly framed with RJE and RD, v.1 possibly being RJE and v.31c perhaps RD.

Even apart from the textual criticism, the language and the facts contained in the song present not a small bunch of problems both linguistic and historical as well as archaeological. The investigation is not only preliminary to the study of the Hebrew language and the religious condition of early Hebrews, but it is also in itself a study to be elucidated along the linguistic, historical and archaeological lines.





## I. THE DAWN OF IRON AGE

The most momentous event in the development of human history is the discovery of iron. The art of smelting iron is of special importance. By the aid of iron the Assyrians marched to conquest, so did the Phrygian invaders of Greece, the Philistine invaders of Palestine, the Roman legions in Spain and Germany, and even the Spanish conquerors of Mexico and Peru. The iron age is divided, for convenience, into the first iron age (1200-900 B.C.) and the second iron age (900-586 B.C.). In the former, smelted iron came into practical use, though it was limited to special districts. In the latter it is wide spread among the civilized nations of those days. The scene of the Song is found in the morning of the first iron age, for the time of Deborah is a little later than 1200 B.C. But it would be near to truth to say that it was, for the Israelites, rather dawn than morning. The words "shield" מָגֶן and "spear" רֶמֶחַ in v. 8 and "chariot" רֶכֶב in v. 28 do not clearly prove <sup>in</sup> themselves whether they were of bronze or of iron. But these are most likely, though some of the shields and spears might have been of bronze or other than iron, intended for iron implements. In the duplicate narrative in chap. 4, it is stated that Sisera



had nine hundred iron chariots( כרכב ברזל ). But this knowledge will hardly contribute to the proof because of its being<sup>a</sup> later addition of RD. It is clear that ברזל is not a Semitic word. According to Hommel\*, both ברזל and Assyrian parṣillu were connected with the Sumerian bargal and the new Sumerian baĵral, the non-Semitic sound ĵ having been transmuted to z (ז) in Semitic. If the material itself had been introduced into Syrian districts together with the name, then iron must have been brought from the east, probably from Babylon and<sup>to</sup> Babylon from Sumeria (cf. Hommel). But whether this word originally designated meteoric or wrought iron requires a careful examination. To our regret there is as yet no satisfactory report coming from<sup>this</sup> direction. Be it from the east or the south, a brief survey of the history of iron in Egypt would be preliminary to the discussion. The Encyclopaedia Britannica asserts by virtue of the example of the group of oxidized iron beads found by Wainright at El Gerzeh, dated about 4000 B.C., that the so-called iron age reaches back to about 4000 years before the Christian era.\* Even excepting this knowledge, archaeologists would bring up the farthest limit of the example

\* Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, '81ff.

\* Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th edit., 'Iron' in Archaeology-



in Egypt to 3500 B.C. To enumerate other examples, they are as follows, namely, pieces of metal found in the Great Pyramid (2900 B.C.) at Gizeh and in a grave (2600 B.C.) at Abydos (both, in Brit. Mu.) as well as iron objects found in the innermost sarcophagus of Tut-ankh-amen, which were found in 1925, three in number, namely, a dagger-blade, part of an amuletic bracelet, and a miniature head-rest, all of wrought iron according to A. Lucas. In the light of later historical evidences and the proofs of modern scientists, this assumption would appear more true, namely, that all of them were not of wrought iron as the above mentioned discoverers had claimed, but of meteoric origin.\* As an example of rarity of iron even in <sup>the</sup> Amarna time, one of the Tell-el-Amarna tablets from a Hittite king to Amenhotep III. (1411-1375 B.C.) cannot be neglected. It mentions some iron as an extremely valuable gift. To this implication should be counted the small piece of amuletic iron, in the tomb of Tut-ankh-amen attached to the gold-bangle, that is, uzat or Horus eye. Common inferior metal would hardly be so treated; on the contrary, one must infer that iron was more precious than gold or as precious as gold. To give

\* T. A. Rickard, A.R.S.M., D.Sc. (Berkeley, Calif.): IRON IN ANTIQUITY.





one more example, among the funerary chattels found in the annex of Tut-ankh-amen's tomb was a wooden chest, the contents of which had been robbed ~~save~~ for miniature iron implements. These are gravers and chisels, set in handles 3 1/2 to 5 in. long. This find also does not fail to indicate that iron was new and rare in Egypt at that time, the date being 1350 B.C., or in other words fifteen and a half centuries later than the building of the Great Pyramid even, in which <sup>an</sup> iron implement had been found. What Howard Carter\* suggests is that the miniature models might have been "gifts to the young king, to record the arrival or discovery of iron in Egypt." Several other examples could be counted into this conclusion. Now, turning our eyes to the Hittites, we must not fail to notice the correspondence between that monarch and Rameses II. (1292-1225 B.C.) in which the latter asks Hattusil II., the Hittite king, to supply him with smelted iron. A clay tablet conveying the reply reads as follows: "Concerning the iron about which I sent word, there is no good quality iron in the city of Kissiwaana, in the house of my seal," that is to say, that at the moment none to hand in the magazine in Kissiwaana, has been found at Boghaz Keui. This correspondence offers us a very close date for the introduction of iron in bulk

\* Howard Carter: The Tomb of Tut-ankh-amen, 1927, vol. ii. p. 48



into Asia Minor, and thence perhaps into Egypt, where in spite of its early examples, it had been hitherto a rare material handled by jewellers for special use, most of it being in all probability of meteoric origin. In the time of Rameses II. the people called Kisvadna (probably Kissiwadna) are said by Winkler\* to have furnished instruments made of iron. Moreover, Tiglath-pileser I. (1125-1100 B.C.) left an inscription saying: "Four wild bulls, in the country of Mitanni with my mighty bow, with my iron spear, and sharp darts, I killed." What can be deduced from the foregoing facts is this, that the Hittites at about 1200 B.C. were in the most favored position to make use of wrought iron, without raising the question whether they obtained the art of smelting by their own invention or from the east. (Notice here that the word 𐎠𐎵𐎫 is of Sumerian derivation.) On the other hand, Israelites who were still half nomads or at best uncivilized country people among mountains and valleys, had scarcely any access to iron implements. Even in case they could obtain it, iron was kept out under taboo by ancient Hebrews. For, metal, especially iron was thought to be inhabited or charged by a certain spirit, and it would be very repugnant

\* Winkler: Vorderasien im Zweiten Jahrtausend, 1913.





to other spirits, and perhaps to Yahweh. The old Japanese custom to put sword under the bed of the dead to keep off the attack of certain malicious or covetous spirits was still surviving in rare cases in the writer's boyhood; in the very same way iron had been used by the ancient Semites. The Book of Kings alludes to this ancient taboo idea on iron in its report about the building of the Solomon's temple, that "there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in the building." (I K. 6:7). Such was the circumstance. How great a disturbance, then, it was when they were informed that Sisera was coming forth against the Israelites with nine hundred iron chariots. This terror is so vividly commemorated in the Song mingled with the unsuppressable joy after the victory:

"Was there a shield or spear seen

Among the forty thousand in Israel?"

- v. 8.

While the plain dwellers are already making noise in the bright morning color of iron civilization reflected upon the waters of Kishon, Israelites, on the contrary, are still pitching their tents spotted here and there among the valleys and the bushes in the nebulous and yet pious dawn. The conflict at stake is none the less the clash of the two civilizations of pre-iron and iron ages. The word רכב



in the Song, therefore, is not without due reason to be read לרנן ברנן as is rendered by RD in chap. 4. The more interesting would the inference become if the name ארד' is proved to be Hittite. After two centuries from Hattusil I., probably about 1200 B.C.\*, the archives of Boğhaz Keui after the reign of Arnuandas, the heir of Hattusil II, went into failure. The disintegration of the Hittite empire by the downfall of the Hittite rulers is significant of this age. That the remaining Hittite generals, even after the supremacy was lost, made their way among the Canaanites is not hard to understand (cf. Uriah, the Hittite, 2S. 23:34). Was not Sisera one among them, who had nine hundred iron chariots of his own and gathered <sup>the</sup> petty kings of Canaan to combat with the Israelites who were very anxious of the possession of the fertile plain of Jezreel? Be that as it may, the thrilling news of Sisera's iron chariots made Israelites, in fact, to tremble. But the <sup>stage of</sup> history is now at the moment when the people of the mountain God are making their way downwards to the plain where the sparkling wheels of iron chariots are rolling back and forth.

\* Garstang: The Land of the Hittites, p. 368.

Barton: Archaeology and the Bible, p. 80-81.



Theirs is iron, ours is not! Hence, "Awake Deborah! Arise Barak!" For the right interpretation, the situation of the Israelites should be understood as being in an iron-less stage.\* True it is, that Barak, not altogether from his cowardice, but perhaps also from his very foresight of the impending crisis was consumed to human weakness and would say to the prophetess, "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go, but if thou wilt not go, I will not go." (Jg. 4:8). How great was the joy of the victory in such a concerned situation and how significant an event it had been in the making of the Hebrew nation and religion is ringing in waves of rhythms throughout the Song. So it breaks out in the drumming strain:

בְּפָרֶעַ פָּרְעוֹת בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל      בְּהַחֲנֹכַח עִם בָּרַק בְּיָחוּ  
שָׁמְעוּ מַלְכִּים הַחוּצוֹת רִנָּה      אֲנֹכִי לִיָּחוּ אֲנֹכִי אֲשִׁירָה  
אֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ      אֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ

\* It is obvious that the obscure districts in Palestine were still in a nebulous stage in those days so far as the iron was concerned. That the bronze implements such as harrow and ax survived the iron age till much later ages is suggested by the following phrases: "Axes of iron" in 2S chap. 12: 31. Again, an inscription left by Ashur-nasir-pal (885-860 B.C.) in the fourth year of his reign, says: "From the city of Zamri I departed and into the difficult mountain of Lara, which was not suited for the passage of chariots and armies, with the hatchet of iron (parsillu) I cut and with axes of bronze (eru) I hewed a way!"





## II. PROBLEMS ON פָּרַע

### A. Leadership ? בַּפָּרַע פִּרְעוֹן בִּישְׂרָאֵל

The first two words are much debated by many commentators. In LXX(Cod. Alex. and Theod.) we have:

ἐν τῷ ἄρξασθαι ἀρχηγού;

that is to say, "in the leading on of the leaders in Israel."

So, <sup>it is</sup> taken <sup>by</sup> Gesenius as well as <sup>by the</sup> English Revised Version, Hoffatt's Translation, and Die Heilige Schrift d. Alten Testaments. by Kautzsch. The poet, according to this interpretation, calls upon his hearers to praise God that the princes of Israel took the lead as leaders, put themselves at the head, and that the people admirably responded to their call. The Arabic equivalent may perhaps be <sup>فَرَّعَ</sup> (overtop, or fig. excel) and <sup>فَرَّعَ</sup> (noble, or eminent man). Also in Sabaeen, פָּרַע means 'to be lofty.' If this view is taken, a good parallelism may be obtained with v. 2b:

בִּישְׂרָאֵל, with the coincident example in v. 9:

לְבִי לַחֲקֵקִי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַמִּתְנַדֵּב עִם בִּי. An explanation is also tried for the feminine form of פָּרַע. It is explained as the so-called intensitive fem. (Wright: Arab. Gram., i. p. 157), used especially in names of callings, titles of respect, and the like; e.g. خَلِيفَة; in Hebrew, perhaps



קָטַל, סָפַר etc. (Ges. § 122:4b). But this translation is less favored in the light of the recent study on the religious customs of the Semites. Prior to the conclusion, two more views will be set forth. Syriac and Targum give the root the sense which it ordinarily has in Syriac, Aramaic, and Mishnic Hebrew (but not in BH): "for the retribution" or "the avenging of Israel's wrong." So render the English Authorizea Version, Kimchi, Schumacher, and others. But in Syriac it is, by principle, in Ethpeal that it takes the full force "to receive retribution"; otherwise, it means "to shoot forth, to sprout, to bud, etc." The force of the Ethpeal is hardly compensated by the Hithpael in the next phrase (הִתְנַחֵם). Nor does it restore any beauty of parallelism. Some modern scholars, starting from the assumed primary meaning 'to loose', render the verb, 'set free, liberate.' The primary force of the biliteral פָּר is to 'break', e. g. פָּרַד, פָּרַם, פָּרַשׁ, פָּרַץ, פָּרַק, פָּרַם, פָּרַח; all these have the same original force to 'break,' whence come the detached renderings 'to break in pieces, to loosen, to separate, etc.' Now, how to take the force of the root, 'to loose, to let go,' is a question.





Luther, like the above mentioned scholars, renders "dass Israel wider frei ist worden." But is this not only awkwardly connected with the next clause? Neither of these interpretations is justified by usage, and neither makes a parallel passage to the later half of the verse  
 וְכָרַח יְיָ.

## B. Consecration ?

וְרָח properly means 'to loosen' (cf. Ex. 5:4), especially 'to let the hair go loose' (Lev. 10:6; 13:45), and the noun וְרָח is used of the Nazirite (Num. 6:5; Ezek. 44:20). So some versions of LXX render as follows:

ἀπεκαλύφθη ἀποκαλύμμα ἐν ἱ

and more clearly in Cod. Sinaiticus,

ἐν τῷ ἀνακαλύψασθαι κεφαλᾶς

Wearing the hair long was the mark of a vow not to do certain things until a special object had been obtained; the practice was observed not only by the Nazirites but by the warriors bent on vengeance. As soon as a man takes the vow to poll his locks at the sanctuary, the hair is a consecrated thing, and as such, inviolable until the moment for discharging the vow arrives; and so the flowing,



streaming locks of the warrior, as well as <sup>of</sup> the Nazirite, are the visible marks of his consecration\*. Therefore, the intended purpose of  $\text{לָרַחֵץ}$  is to loosen the hair, i.e. to poll them, and the long hair presupposes the polling after all. When the vow is discharged, then the consecrated locks are cut. It is to say, therefore, that the vowed warrior did vow to  $\text{לָרַחֵץ}$ , and since that time on his locks are  $\text{לָרַחֵץ}$ ; so he must be a  $\text{فَرِيعٌ}$  (an eminent man, hence, by and by a noble). The growing hair must not be touched, for there is a taboo. Hence we can understand the usage, 'to sprout'; said of hair: Syr.,  $\text{فَرِيعٌ}$ ; Assy.,  $\text{pir'u}$ ; Arab.,  $\text{فَرِيعٌ}$ . We can find traces of hair-offering in vow in Ps. 68:21 (v. 22 in Heb.), which reads:

לֹא-אֱלֹהִים יִסְחָזַק רֹאשׁ אִיכָבוֹד  $\text{לְרַחֵץ}$  מִחֶלֶד בְּאַשְׁמִינוֹ

In Dt. 32:42, there is found the same word  $\text{לָרַחֵץ}$

$\text{לְרַחֵץ}$ . For the original idea, therefore, of v. 1, the following translations would better fit the case:

"With the long streaming locks in Israel" or  
 "When the locks grew long in Israel" etc.

\*Wellhausen: Reste Arabischen Heidentums, p. 123-124:

"So lange man unter dem Gelübde ist, muss man das Haar wachsen lassen; wenn man es hat, fällt das Haar... Ihram heisst eigentlich Heiligung. Es entspricht in Wort und Sache dem hebräischen  $\text{לְרַחֵץ}$ , der würdigen Vorbereitung zum Feste und Opfer... Es scheint, dass das Wachsenlassen des Haars im Ihram missverstanden ist. Nicht deshalb liess  
 (-to the bottom of the next page)



All this means , "when the warriors took the vow of vengeance by consecrating their hair ." Though not without some reserve, because of our lack of thorough knowledge of the ancient Hebrew, this ~~seems~~ the most plausible interpretation in the light of the religious customs of the Semites as well as in the proper interpretation of the word. A valiant leader would commit himself to such a vow; it is especially figurative of the leader-warrior. Hence comes the meaning, 'leader, noble.' This is <sup>an</sup> easier and more natural interpretation than any other. The thrilling news is talked about from tent to tent; the patriotic spirit is stirred up, and the warriors are become men of Ule with serious vows.. This is only showing how firm was their resolution.

#### APPENDIX: HAIR-OFFERING IN JAPAN

Though W.R. Smith is to a great extent thorough-going in giving ~~the~~ informations of the hair-offering from various ~~part~~ directions of this ancient world, it would not be digressing to add one more example from the far East. The ancient Japanese warriors who were called 'Samurai', used in war times to have their hair long. But not so often

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man das Haar wachsen, um sich eine Abstinenz aufzuerlegen, sondern um es zu opfern. Und die Haarschur war darum ursprünglich nicht bloss ein nachträgliches Zeichen des vollbrachten Opfers, sondern selber ein Opfer.  
of. W.R. Smith: The Religion of the Semites, p. 323-335.





was the religious meaning found. On the other hand, Bald Head of a warrior would deserve notice. Though it is not clear when it had been initiated among the Samurai, yet we can affirm its practice throughout the whole period of the Tokugawa Shogunate. At fifteen years of age, any male youth of the samurai class was admitted to the full prerogative of the samuraiship through the solemn 'genbuku-shiki,' that is, the ceremony of shaving the front of the head. The matter itself is called the "genbuku." (服元). The remaining hair on both sides and at the back were gathered up on the crown and were brought over to the middle of the bald front. The figure of genbuku remained the same so long as the samurai was remaining such, but should he happen to become a Buddhist priest or an ordinary citizen, he would at once shave all over in the former case and have them all over in the latter case. When once a lad of the samurai family had entered the samuraihood, he was not supposed any more legally to be his father's, but he was his overlord's. Though he was understood still to live in his father's house, he could from that time on expose his life to death if it were for the lord. Although, in Japanese morality, it is believed to be undutiful to leave the surviving parents, yet he was a free man in case of death for his lord. It was more honorable than to serve the parents through life, and it was even explained to be fulfilling the true filial duty to the parents. We find a death-determined man in the Samurai. This being so, it is evident that this genbuku has a close relationship with the death idea. Though we need still more research, we can easily imagine that it was designed to mourning beforehand while his life is still whole. Whether it was for the ancestors, or for his father, or for himself, we are not clearly informed. It may not be impossible to suppose, too, in addition to the foregoing three suppositions, that the hair was offered to the lord (N.E. In Japanese, both "the above" and "the government" as well as "god" and "hair" are designated in one old word "Kami". The overlord is of course included here.) as a symbolic offering of his life at the very moment of the genbuku ceremony. In connection with the woman's hair-offering in case of her husband's death, which in every case is symbolic of her death, this notion is not unthinkable. Here it is quite interesting to notice that both the notions and the words are in close coincidence, though with slight and yet reasonable differences, between Hebrew



and Japanese, the Hebrew word being gibbeach(גִּבְעַח), and the Japanese being genbuku. The coincidence of the pronunciation may perhaps be a matter of accident. Be that as it may, it is only desired here to point out that having the hair long or shaved is closely connected with the death-idea, and the practice of hair-offering is apt to be found among warriors. Even in the light of this example from the far East, the last view on גִּבְעַח will be favored.



### III. DEBORAH'S POSITION IN THE SONG

In ascribing the authorship to Deborah, scholars are not unanimous. Though in v.1 we read the phrase,

וַחֲשֹׁרֶה דְּבוֹרָה וּבָרַק

we should ascribe it to later addition of RJE\* derived probably from misunderstanding of the 1st per. in vv. 3,9,7. Of these the last with the word 'חֲשֹׁרֶה' is the most interesting from the linguistic point of view. Prior to the discussion of it a few other points about Deborah will be dwelt upon.

#### a. On the Name.

The names both <sup>of</sup> Deborah and <sup>of</sup> Barak have given occasion to all manner of conceits from what they mean; Deborah is 'bee', Lapidoth, her husband, is 'torches,' and Barak is 'lightening.' Whether they are alluding to some remains of obscured totemism or family religion is not asserted, and yet thinkable. Totemism seems always to lose ground after the introduction of pastoral life. We should say, therefore, that new ideas of pastoral religion overlaid the old notions of totemism, but did not extinguish them, even in names.\* So the animal names of

\* Moore: Polychrome Bible (Hebrew)

\* W.R. Smith: Rel. of the Sem., p. 385





women are not uncommon in the O.T.; Bachmann collects the following: Zipporah (little bird), Hoglah (grouse), Huldah (weasel), Egla (heifer), Rachel (ewe), Jael (wila-goat), etc.

#### b. Deborah's Home.

In chap. 4, the home of Deborah is in Ephraim, while in chap. 5 it belongs to Issachar, as also that of Barak:

וְרִי בִישָׁעֵכֶר עִם-דִּבְרָה וַיֵּשֶׁעֶכֶר כֵּן בָּרֶק

The phrase, "she used\* to sit under the palm of Deborah" (4:5), is most likely to be later addition. Moore, in his Polychrome Hebrew Bible rendered it as an addition of post-exilic authors or editors. There was a Tomb of Deborah below Bethel (Gen. 35:8 E). where, according to the ancestral legend, the nurse of Rebekah with the same name was buried.. The name of the Mourning Oak (אֵלֹן בְּכֹוֹת) under which it stood was explained of the mourning for Deborah. This tree is in all probability the same with the Deborah Palm\* mentioned here, two stories having been combined from the similarity of the name by the post-exilic editor. From this association of names there may have arisen the idea that Deborah's home was in the

\* יוֹשְׁבָנָה (used to sit), for the syntax of participles, see Ges. Heb. Gram. (Cowley), § 116  
 \* Abarb., Tach., Ewald, Del., Dillm.; Ewald plausibly combines it also with the Oak of Tabor in 1S 10:8 (Ges. des Vol. Isr.)



heart of the mountains of Ephraim. In other words, the narrative about Deborah, the nurse, furnished such an unexpected idea. From 5:15, it would appear that she was of the tribe of Issachar; and both chaps. 4 and 5 do not fail to lead us think that her home was in or near the plain of Jezreel. It has been conjectured by Wellhausen\* that the name of the more famous Kedesh in Galilee has supplanted an obscure Kedesh in Issachar, which is mentioned in 1Ch. 6:72 together with Deborah not far from Mt. Tabor. It is quite possible that Kedesh in the immediate vicinity of Hazor, west of Merom, supplanted an obscure Kedesh. (cf. Jabin's story, Josh. 11). The conjecture, then, is plausible, that it was at or near Daberath\* ( $\Delta\alpha\beta\epsilon\iota\rho\omega\theta, \Delta\alpha\beta\epsilon\iota\rho\alpha$ ) (cf. Josh. 19:12, 21:28; 1Ch. 6:72,) the modern Debūrīyeh at the western foot of Tabor.

### c. Deborah's Position

Finally, we are led to the interesting linguistic question about the invocation of Deborah. In v. 7b we read the following clause:

עַל שִׁפְתַּי דְּבוֹרָה  
יִשְׁמָעַל דָּם שִׁפְתַּי

\*Wellhausen: Composition d. Hexat., 221

\*H. Guthe gives the site on the same spot in his Bibelatlas



This self-invocation raises the question of authorship when it is compared with other passages in which Deborah speaks <sup>in</sup> persons other than the 1st per. In most striking contrast <sup>does</sup> it speak with v. 12, "Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song," which forbids us to take it as the self-invocation of the poet. The superscription of the Ode, which asserts Deborah's authorship, is clearly a later addition (cf. Ex. 15: Moses; in Ps.: David), and does not decide the question here. יְיָ in v. 3 may be taken as an invocation of the author representing Israel. יְיָ in v. 13 seems to be weightier than the preceding, and important, therefore, for the decision of יְיָ in v. 7b. In some versions of <sup>the</sup> LXX\* ἐμοῦ is rendered αὐτοῦ (ἰ) which is preferred by prominent scholars to יְיָ of <sup>the</sup> Massoretic text. Be that as it may, a doubt is still left regarding יְיָ. All Greek versions and <sup>the</sup> Vulgate have it in <sup>the</sup> 3rd pers. The third person can be used in the 2nd per. as vocative. When, therefore, this ending is proved as 2nd per., then the matter would be cleared up. What person, then, is יְיָ intended for? \*x

\* Cod. Vaticanus and Catena Nicephori

x Nachtigall and Botticher al. render x a peculiarity of northern dialect; while, Moore thinks it of different origin from יְיָ. As to usage it is NH (Cant., Eccl., etc.), and in MH supplants יְיָ altogether. Neubauer and Sayce thought that they found the letters יְיָ on a stone weight, probably (cont.





is<sup>a</sup> pronoun with the elision of  $\aleph$  and assimilation of  $\aleph$  of  $\aleph\aleph\aleph$ . The 1st per. ending  $\aleph$  can be taken as the archaic ending of 2.s.f. instead of 1.s., for, in Arabic, 2.s.f. ending is  $\underline{ti}$  (تِي); while<sup>the</sup> original pronominal ending of 2.s.f. in Hebrew was most probably  $\aleph\aleph\aleph^*$  or  $\aleph\aleph\aleph$ , and  $\aleph$  became  $\aleph\aleph$  and  $\aleph$  was dropped out. Though it is ambiguous in<sup>the</sup> Hebrew consonant text, it would be inferred to have been intended for  $\aleph\aleph$ . So  $\aleph\aleph\aleph\aleph\aleph\aleph$  is read  $\aleph\aleph\aleph\aleph\aleph\aleph$ , being translated, "Till thou didst arise, Deborah."\* This seems in all probability true. Now that the position of Deborah in the Song is fixed, the problem of the authorship may be put in the same light.

Much has sometimes been made of the so-called psychological evidence; the recital of Jael's deed (v. 24-27) and the description of the scene in Sisera's palace (v. 28-30), it has been claimed or suggested, could not have been written except by a woman (Herder, Réville, Bachmann, Bertheau, Cassel, al.). Bertheau even says that he finds in the reference to Sisera's mother a touch of woman's sympathy. But this kind of psychological evidence is without sound basis, and hardly admits of argument.

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\* Ges. 44 and Harp. 50, 3.4.

x Moore, Cooke, Rödiger (1839), Bötticher, Graetz, Wellhausen, A. Müller, Reuss, Kittel.

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(continued) - of the 8th cent. B.C., which was found on the site of Samaria; but<sup>the</sup> reading is disputed. cf. Palest. Ex. Fund Qu. St., July, 1894, p. 220-231; 284-287; cf. also Phoenician  $\aleph\aleph$  which is also abbreviated to  $\aleph$ , and pronounced sa, se, si.



#### IV. HEBREW RELIGION IN THE MAKING

##### A. יבחר אלהים חדשים ?

The rendering, "They chose new gods," appears, apart from the difficulties of the text, to suit the situation of Israel with her religion in the making. Since the time of passing of Moses scarcely fifty or sixty years had passed. The fathers could tell the children about the mighty acts of God through Moses, but the sons and the grandsons had already inclined toward the sensual ways of the Canaanite religion. They were well attracted by the agricultural gods and their cults rather than the stern Yahweh of the nomad. Indeed, they chose new gods, and this apostacy would rouse the indignation of Yahweh; then "there was war in the gates" (v. 8b). Such may be what is implied by Targum and English Version. But the text is terribly corrupt, and is rendered variously by different versions. On account of its difficulties, Moore's Polychrome Bible omits the verse as well as Moffatt's translation. "They chose new gods," literally, "it (Israel) chose new gods," which is pointing to the apostacy, and so the invasion as punishment, an idea quite foreign to the poem. The order is rather abrupt and lacks grammatical smoothness. Jerome translates: Nova bella elegit Dominus, which is ungrammatical in Hebrew, and this as well as the preceding is open to the objection that יָהוָה,



not אלהים, is used for the deity throughout. Though there is the phrase 'יהוה אלהי יוש', אלהי is simply the attributive of יהוה. Ewald and others\* give the translation, "He chose new judges," which is based upon an erroneous interpretation of Elohim in Ex. 21:6, 22:7, 8; Ps. 82:1, 6 as 'judges.' Another emendation has been proposed:

וְכָתִי אֱלֹהִים מְרִלִי  
 אֱלֹהִי לָתֶם לְשִׁפְרִים

So renders H.S.d.A.T. von Kautzsch:\*

"die Gottesschlachtungen feierten,  
 die Speise ging aus in den Städten."

These emendations, both Hebrew and German, assume Israel in trouble, and would furnish a good connection with the next clause, "was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?", that is to say that there were no weapons with which to meet the well-armed Canaanites; they were compelled to take up any rude implements they could find.

\* Meier, Bertheau, Briggs, al.

\* Kautsch omits the verse in the text, and gives this rendering in the apparatus.





LXX(Alex. and Luci.) as well as Peshitta and Vulgate give  
 ὧς ἄρτον κριθίνον( וְכֵן שֶׁעָרִים בָּרֶמֶס ); hence it is translated,  
 "then there was barley bread."\*

So many emendations as there be, yet nothing is  
 definite and final. After all, the corruption of the text  
 is too deep-seated for recovery; probably an early attempt  
 had been made by a scribe to correct the passage from  
 Dt. 32:17: "They sacrificed unto demons, which were no God,  
 to gods that they knew not, to new gods that came up of  
 late, which your fathers dreamed not." If this emendation  
 had been based upon Deuteronomy, it must be put between  
 621 B.C., that is, the year of the promulgation of the book,  
 and the Restoration of the exiles, because the theocratic  
 system had been carried out in the post-exilic time to its  
 extreme, to the disappearance of local cults. In most  
 probability, it may be put either a little before the cap-  
 tivity or during the captivity, the latter being more probable.  
 For, as the Song of Moses (Dt. 32) is deduced, from internal  
 evidence, to be an insertion by a second Deuteronomic  
 hand during the Exile \*, the emendation here must <sup>be</sup> supposed  
 to have been made in the closing years of the Exile, not too

\* Budde: Richt. u. Sam., p. 103

\* See the bottom of the next page;



remote from the writing of the former. This is why the monolatry idea of Deuteronomy is so clearly reflected here. Provided that this view is justified, it is not hard to imagine how the Song of Deborah encouraged the exiles in their captivity and how the fiery spirit of patriotism saved them from the ebbing faith in Yahweh-elohei-Israel. And as to the reason of their present distress they would say in unison with other writers of the period: יִכְתֹּר אֱלֹהִים תְּלָשִׁים.

\* ( from the preceding page): The points of contact with Jer., Is. 40-55, Ezek., and the Wisdom literature suggest this proposition. The words, אֱלֹהִים (my doctrine), תּוֹעֲבָה (abomination), עֲבָלִים (vanities), יוֹם אִיָּם (day of their calamity), אֲנִי אֶחְיֶה (as I live) are common in exilic and post-exilic, but hardly found in pre-exilic writings.



## 1. Yahweh's Dwelling Place

As the situation is complicated, the discussion will be carried out in four divisions:

### 1. Sinai, not primarily designated here.

הרים נזלו מפני יהוה

וְהָרֵם סִינַי

מפני יהוה אלהי ישראל

Not to speak of the improbable allusion of the sublime phenomena which attended the giving of the law, the text, וְהָרֵם סִינַי, is not only spoiling the meter, but also grammatically unnatural. An emendation has been tried by 'ע ו], but the rendering of Codex Sinaiticus rather makes us doubt its position here with its striking explanatory phrase - *οὐρανοῦ τοῦ Σινᾶ*. The conjecture that this is a later addition would meet with no serious opposition. This being so, cutting off the phrase, there is no direct allusion to Sinai as has been supposed.

### 2. 'Sinai' from another Angle

From another angle Sinai is still meant here. But it is the Sinai in Edom. In accordance with the wanderings of His people, Yahweh did not



stay behind as the Sinai-god, but moved along with them. In like manner, even Sinai, the mountain of God, would go after Him. And it was realized at least in the hearts of the people. To speak briefly, while the name was carried along and remained all the same, the place was obliged to be shifted here and there. In course of time various strata of the tradition about the location have seemingly furnished materials for various doctrines. So we find that the rock of Meribah near Kadesh is designated as the Rock in Horeb (Ex. 17:6-E, cf. Num. 27:14; Dt. 32:51); again, Seir in Edom is identified with Sinai (Dt. 33:2-UE; Hab. 3:3). It certainly must have been to this Horeb in Edom that Elijah fled (1K 19:8). At the time of Leborah, Sinai was already assimilated to Seir and the field of Edom, whence Yahweh came striding forth. This being the situation, the later hand would very naturally, moved by the current beliefs, put  $\text{ה\ddot{o}r\ddot{o}n\ddot{o} - \tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\sigma\tau\iota}$  to Siva - on the prepared bed of the context.

### 3. Primary Sinai and Horeb

The problem is not settled yet.

Guthe, in his Bibelatlas, puts Sinai and Horeb on modern Serbal in the peninsula, the former being found on the





east side of the mountain and the latter on the west, for perhaps it is stated in Ex. 3:1b(E) that "he(Moses) led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb." The 'back' was generally taken in the time of the writing as the west, the front being the east; whether we can project this idea into the past is another question. To sum up the general opinions, (1) Von Gall\* regards the identification of Horeb and Sinai as a post-exilic confusion(Nul. 3:22; Ps. 106:19), while they were originally distinct; Horeb lay in the Sinaitic Peninsula, while Sinai was in Midian, on the west coast of Arabia. (2) On the other hand, Sayce<sup>x</sup> and Cheyne<sup>A</sup> bring up the problem towards <sup>the</sup> north, the former, with the reason of the presence of an Egyptian garrison in charge of the mines, places Sinai in the eastern mountains of Seir, and the latter, on the text-critical grounds which favor the supposition that the Moses-clan was admitted to the jus connubii and to religious communion by a tribe of Mišrites(not Midianites) or Kenites which dwelt near

\* Von Gall: Altisr. Kultstätten, 15.

cf. Moore: Judges, 140, 179

Stade: Entst. d. Vol. Isr., 12

Wellhausen: Prolegomena zur Gesch. Isr., 359

<sup>x</sup> Crit. mon., 263ff.

<sup>A</sup> Cheyne: E. Bib. col 8208



Kadesh, prefers some mountain-group near Kadesh.

No final opinion has ever been given. The association of Sinai with the Babylonian moon-goddess, Sin, has generally been accepted. And if Horeb (חֹרֵב) is suggesting, the participial form being translated "one who makes dry," the ebb of the tide, then the moon or the moon-deity is very likely alluded to. In any case, both Sinai and Horeb should be reexamined in the light of the ancient moon-cults in South Arabia. The facts of the moon-cults in ancient Arabia as recounted by Nielsen in his book\* are growing more and more weighty for the right understanding of the Yahweh or rather Yahu cult. But we regret that we must be content as yet with the suggestion that both Sinai and Horeb, as well as Yahu, have to be reexamined in terms of the ancient moon-religion in South Arabia.

#### 4. Yahweh's Dwelling Place

In vv. 4, 5, Yahweh is designated as the god of thunder and storm, coming out from Seir and

\* Nielsen, Ditlef: Altarabische Mondreligion  
of. W.F. Bade: O.T. in the Li. of To-day, p. 59



the field of Edom to help His people in the battle against Sisera. The ancient dwelling-place of Yahweh, before the establishment of His seat at Zion, was not in Canaan but at Sinai(Q and P), or Horeb(E and D). Now, apart from the difficulty of the location of Sinai and Horeb, it is noticeable that Yahweh comes up from the south, the field of Edom (the plateau of Edom and Seir being meant). Here we discern that the religion of the Israelites is now found in the transitional period with Yahweh the Sinai-god, who was originally restricted within his boundary or hima, and who made Moses put off his shoes from his feet, for the place whereupon he was standing is holy ground (hima). It is quite a common phenomenon in the religion of the Semites that the local god is the god of a certain restricted precinct. So long as the worshipper lives in accessible neighborhood from the god's seat, the relation would remain uninterrupted, and therefore, there is no need on the part of god to change his dwelling place. The god with whom Moses happened to be acquainted at Mt. Horeb, probably under the influence of Jethro (or Hobab), the Kakin of Midian, was not more than the god of the place. But the so-called exodus happened to entice Yahweh to come out from the restriction of his





boundary. It has become a firm belief among Israelites, after the liberation from the bondage in Egypt and the Crossing of the Red Sea, that Yahweh had indeed worked mightily among them. It is plausible that they may have been led to think of Yahweh as coming out over the line of <sup>his</sup>  $\bar{h}$ ima in case of great need of his people. He has really partaken in the exodus! From this time on the relation between Yahweh and Israel was not an ordinary one, and the close relationship could no longer be dissolved by any means, even in their spontaneous wanderings to and fro through the desert. The absolute relationship with the boundary is about to yield to the relative one. Wherever Israel is He must be there as their God, for Yahweh had made the covenant with His people. After the settlement, however, in the land of Canaan, the religion of Yahweh is found at its crisis. Yahweh is the god of the nomad after all. To prove himself their God even in Canaan, the land of baal, the agricultural god, Yahweh is under the requisite circumstance to show His mighty act. To speak from the point of view of the people who were very reluctant to abandon their old belief, there must take place some mutation in their minds about the dwelling-place of their deity. The result in issue was that



though Yahweh lives on Sinai (of Edom, in the Song), His land is Canaan. He will, therefore, come up from the mountains of Edom for the help of His people at their critical moment. In the present victory, won against Sisera, the awful coming out of Yahweh from over the field of Edom accompanied by thunderstorm, is commemorated with such a vivid delineation that as He passes, the earth trembled and the heavens were in commotion (so LXX\*). With the perfect victory under the help of Yahweh, sweeping away the enemy in the rushing torrent caused by the storm and the heavy rain, the onetime relaxed confidence in Yahweh was no doubt restored to its proper position in the minds of the people with the result that Yahweh was found ever since with a strong reason to be dwelling in the land of Canaan. After not more than two hundred years, through the stages of Samuel and Elijah, Yahweh is found on the top of Mt. Zion well seated, and at the time of Isaiah, His צִיּוֹן and יְרוּשָׁלַיִם are in Zion and Jerusalem. (Is. 31:9).

\* The first of the twofold occurrences of יְהוָה is, after LXX (Εταράχθη), ~~is~~ better read יְהוָה (Niph. of יָדָה).



# V. FIGHTING OF THE STARS

## A. Against Sisera? ( שָׁרָיָהּ עַל )

"From heaven fought the stars,

From their paths(courses)they fought

עַל Sisera." - v.20

The words, according to Moore, are a poetical description of the intervention of Yahweh to discomfit the enemy and give victory to Israel. The phrase is variously understood and explained by commentators. It is suggested by Hollmann\* that the poet represented the stars as animated beings, the host of Yahweh, which in some unseen way gave aid to Israel; while in the respective commentaries of Moore and Cooke, the rendering is taken figuratively. As to the figurative description of Yahweh the following passages are referred to, Josh. 10:11; 1S 7:10; Ps. 18:14; Jer. 23:19). Whether there is projected in the text any old notion of the tradition of stars is worth notice. Westphal is suggesting in his book\* that the stars appeared to the primitive people as the weather maker, the idea being connected with

\* Hollmann: Commentarius philologico-criticus in Carmen Debora.

\* Westphal, G.: Yahwehs Wohnstätten.



the thick rain clouds. Wellhausen\*, too, does not fail to notice "Dass die alten Semiten in hohem Grade die wechselnde monatliche Witterung als lunaren Einfluss auffassten, geht aus vielen Texten hervor, besonders aus der Thatsache, dass sie den Monatgott mit dem Wettergott gleichsetzten. Gewitter, Wind und Regen werden in den Inschriften verschiedenen Mondphasen zugeschrieben." But there is, of course, no suggestion in the text, as Westphal also does not fail to notice, that Yahweh is represented by the stars or the clouds. They are simply working as the confederates of Yahweh. Only it must be kept in mind in handling this text that Yahweh has not yet vacated the sphere of a clan-god and he must not be conceived in his later character of a supra-mundane nor intra-mundane god. And Yahweh is moving somewhat in parallel to other powers of nature, and he is about to become the lord of hosts. Hence, we should rather notice the interesting transitional dawn from the clan-god to the henotheistic one. In reviewing the fighting of Yahweh, accompanied by the powers of nature, we find Yahweh quite active and mighty even in the land of Canaan, and his ancient seat

\* Wellhausen: Reste d. Arab. Heid., 154, foot note.





is gradually passing into the mist of tradition.

Parallel with this, the untamed forces of nature are being naturalized under the mighty hand of Yahweh.

# B. Host of Sisera? ( מַלְאֲכֵי דַּי )

After the pro-Babylonian theory of Jeremias\*, the text appears in the following form with a little change of cloth and the total disappearance of the former featurel:

"Vom Himmel her kämpften die Sterne,

von seinen Standorten kämpfte das Volk Siseras."

He changes 'D .Dַּי to 'D דַּי<sup>x</sup>. It means the opponents of Yahweh. As Tiamat with her helpers, the zodiacal signs of the earlier aeons fought against Marauk, so here the stars in their stations stand upon the side of the tyrant Sisera. As for the evidences that the belief in <sup>the</sup> personality of the heavenly bodies was widespread in the ancient east, reference is often made to Is. 24:21 and 40:26; so does Jeremias. But notice, all of these references are of the post-exilic period.

\* A. Jeremias: Das Alte Testament im Licht des Alten Orients, p. 422.

x Winckler: Gesch. Isr., ii. 131.



The view is generally accepted by most of the modern scholars that it is only after the exile that the Jews became influenced by the Babylonian mode of thinking. On the contrary, Jeremias, to make his opinion the more forceful, emendates מִלְחָמָה to מִלְחָמָה. he goes further and would say that Motifs of the Dragon combat are hidden in the mysterious מִלְחָמָה (Jg. 4:18) with which Deborah covers Sisera: it recalls the hunting net of Marduk-Orion for entangling Tiamat. A dragon-combat motif lies, further, in the unusual weapon, the hammer, with which Jael breaks Sisera's head whilst he drinks, etc., etc. Were he not

required to take more account of the comparison of the pre- and post-exilic literatures, his apparatus would be all right now! But it is rather difficult to think that in those early days of taboo ~~would~~ any secluded mountaineer <sup>could</sup> be so easily influenced by foreign thought, except in the case of union by means of blood covenant.

Moreover, he should be advised that chap. 4 is the work of RJE, and there are, in the same chapter, some misunderstandings of the poetical expressions in the Song. For example, the poetical expression of hammer for a tent pin is misunderstood, and is rendered the nail and the hammer.



In short, interesting and of superb scholarship as his theory is, Jeremias falls flat on text-critical grounds which of course are of first importance to the student of the Bible.





## VI. THE PROBLEM OF SISERA

The counterpart of Deborah is the pitiable giant Sisera who was slain by a woman. No scholar would perhaps be opposed to the proposition that it is not a Semitic name. That it is like a Hittite name is suggested by both Kittel\* and Moore in reference to the numerous Hittite names in -sira, e.g. hatasira, manrasira, etc. Marquart<sup>x</sup> compares the name Pi-siri(s) borne by the last king of Yasbuk whom Shalmaneser II. mentions as an ally of Sangara, whilst Sayce gives Assy. sasur; Ball<sup>+</sup> gives the Assy. sisseru, seseru. Cheyne<sup>o</sup> says that if the Nethinim (Neh. 7:55; Ezr. 2:53) are really Ethnites or N. Arabians, the name Sisera can be claimed to be of N. Arabian origin. He is inclined to assume this view. Reviewing these propositions, it seems not easy to tell the race by mere form of the name. But as to the general Sisera, here, the preponderance is likely to be for the Hittite theory, for the districts of the battle and the allusion of the iron chariots as well as the background of the contemporary history would make us

\* Kittel: Great Men and Movements in Israel, p. 51  
cf. Muller: Asien u. Europa, 332.

x Marquart: Fundamente israelitischer u. jüdischer Ges., '36.

+ Ball: Light of the East.

o Ency. Bib. on Sisera and Shamgar.



expect a Hittite character. About 1200 B.C. Boghaz-Keui, where the Hittite archives were located, was invaded by Muski-Phrygians, and it was followed by the disintegration of the Hatti rulers. In the great combine of land and sea powers against Egypt, which Rameses III. resisted and dispersed, the Hittites again figure among the confederates, but this time no longer as leaders; and subsequently they appear no more in Egyptian history. It is quite plausible that Sisera, as one of the fallen Hatti rulers, was very anxious to unite the scattered and much-decimated remnants of the old Hittite state and the Canaanite-Amorite \* provinces of that region. The Hittite derivation of the name Sisera, therefore, has the strongest presumption on account of the historical environment, though not without some reserve.

\* The Amorites still possessed most of the fortified cities, especially in the plain of Jezreel. The rendering "Kings of Canaan" should be understood, therefore, to be representing various forces and races united under the leadership of Sisera for the combat against <sup>the</sup> Israelites.



## VII. THE PROBLEM OF SHANGAR-BEN-ANATH

The name itself is non-Semitic. The first difficulty is that he appears as if he were the deliverer in 3:31; while the context of the present passage clearly implies that he was not a deliverer but a foreign oppressor. The notice in 3:31 is, according to the most recent commentators, a very late insertion, later not only than the Deuteronomistic elements in Judges, but also later than the editor to whom the chronological scheme of Judges in the present form is due. The slaughter of the Philistines is premature. Perhaps the motif in 15:14 f., where a similar exploit is assigned to Samuel, might be operative here. Jael must be the same heroine mentioned in vv. 24ff. When once Shangar had been treated by post-exilic interpreters as an Israelite champion the words 'in the days of Jael' were probably inserted from the gloss to mark the period more exactly. The name Shangar has been compared by Moore\* and Marquart<sup>x</sup> to the name of the Hittite King in the 9th cent. B.C.; Sargara or Sagar was the king of Gargamis, then the chief city of the Hittite country, in the days

\* Moore: Judges, p. 106

x Marquart: Fund. isr. u. jüd. Ges., 3.



of Asurnasirpal and Shalmanassar II. Ben-Anath is most probably a Hebraised form of a foreign name. In this case Anath must designate a foreign deity.\* Anath is in all probability taken as Antu of ~~A~~ Babylonia, the daughter, in fact, of Anu. Anath the goddess is represented in an Egyptian stele in the British Museum, seated, holding shield and javelin in the right hand, while with the <sup>left</sup> she brandishes a battle ax<sup>o</sup>; in other places she appears on horse-back similarly armed, or sitting upon a lion.\* That she was especially worshipped by the Hittite cannot be said without a venture. But the evidence given by the Amarna letters prove that the Babylonian influence in Palestine was profound at an early time; the name "Anathoth" is not without due claim of this fact + (cf. Jer. 1:2). Here we have no reason to think of the Hebrews in the same way, for there is found no explicit evidence of the Babylonian influence upon the Hebrews in the pre-exilic times. In what historical relation the Hittite goddess stands to Babylonian Antu is not certain, but it is quite reasonable to imagine that warlike Hittites

\* Wilkinson: *Anc. Egypt*, ed. Birch, iii. p. 236

\* cf. e.g. Moab. Stone. "I am Mesha-ben-Kemosh —

... *Wyy-yj owy yjx*

x Lepsius: *Denkmäler*, Abth. iii. pl. 138

+ W.R. Smith: *Rel. of the Sem.*, p. 211





were only too apt to adopt such warlike goddess. She must be said, therefore, to have been a fit patron-deity for them. Considering the fact that Anath was earnestly worshipped among the Hittites, we would not make too great a mistake in taking Shamgar<sup>for</sup> a Hittite name, and hence perhaps, as Cooke \* suggests, the name of the predecessor of Sisera.

\* Cooke: Judges, p. 46



# VIII. CRITICISM OF THE TACTICS

VV. 19-22:

בָּאוּ מַלְכִים לִלְחָמוֹ אֶזְנֵי לִלְחָמוֹ מִלְכֵי כְנָעַן  
 בַּסַּעֲרָה עַל-מִי מָגִדוֹ כִּצֵּעַ כֶּסֶף לֹא לָקְחוּ:  
 מִן-שָׁמַיִם לִלְחָמוֹ הַכּוֹכָבִים מְסַלְּוֹתָם לִלְחָמוֹ עִם סִיחָרָא  
 נִתַּל אִישׁוֹן נִרְפָּם נִתַּל אֲדוֹמִים נִתַּל אִישׁוֹן  
 אֲדָרְכֵי נַפְשֵׁי עוֹ:

אֶזְנֵי הַלָּחֶם עֲקָבֵי-סוֹם מְהֵרָה וּמְהֵרָה אֲבִירָיו:

*The clash of the armies, the magnificent exertion of the  
 stars for Israel, the rushing torrent of Kishon which only  
 worked to the discomfiture of the enemy and at last the  
 flight of the strong ones, are all depicted in an elevated  
 temper of poetical magnificence. There is heard wonderful  
 galloping of horses in march and flight:*

אֲדָרְכֵי נַפְשֵׁי עוֹ

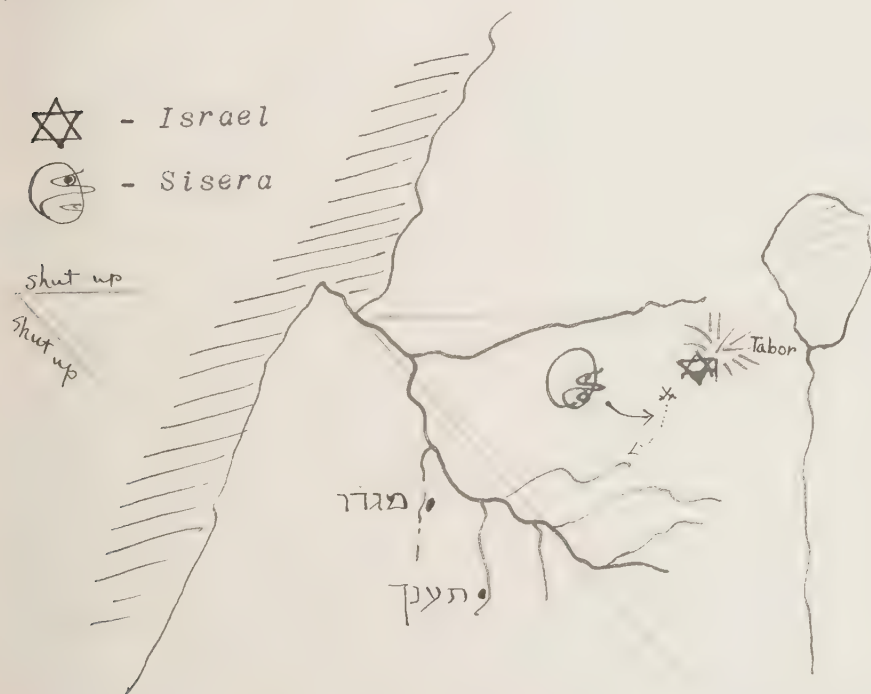
אֶזְנֵי הַלָּחֶם עֲקָבֵי-סוֹם מְהֵרָה וּמְהֵרָה אֲבִירָיו

*The battle on the waters of Megiddo seems to have been the  
 most furious. The waters of Megiddo were tributaries of  
 the Kishon. Taanach and Megiddo were both old towns on  
 the left banks of the river. The battle gave so great  
 influence to later thought that Harmageddon (Rev. 16:16)  
 now signifies the place of the last weird battle of the*



nations. Most of the streams in Palestine are torrents flowing only in winter (נחל, χειμαρρῶος) . They rise and sink promptly by means of rain. The torrents named in the Old Testament are: נִי יַבֶּק, נִי הַבְּשׂוֹר, נִי אֶרְנוֹן, נִי קָנָה. The battle, therefore, must be conjectured to have been fought in winter or in spring when the torrents are apt to rise.

Now, to examine the tactics of both of the armies, that of Sisera is . . . laying siege, so as to cut the transport of provisions; on the other hand, that of Deborah and Barak is what is called the attack by stratagem. Showing the probable positions in a diagram, it appears as follows:







When it was whispered by Heber, the Kenite, to Sisera that Barak has gone up to Mt. Tabor with the troops of ten thousand men from perhaps Zebulun and Naphtali, did not the idea flash into Sisera's mind to cross over to the southern side of Tabor, so as to cut them from communication with the southern tribes of their kin? If this slow siege, which of course was suited to such a great army as Sisera's, was perfectly carried out to its real end, even the picked warriors of Barak would not have been otherwise than consumed by hunger and thirst! The clever notion of Sisera was perfect on the expectation that the dry summer would last the whole year, and that the river Kishon with its tributaries of Megiddo would not be waiting right at his back! In the old Japanese tactics, the array which is called 'the haisuino jin' (背水之陣), that is to say, the array having water at the back, is either the poorest or the bravest. It is a serious situation which can not be easily criticised as good or bad. It greatly depends upon the situation and the spirit of the army. So amazing a victory had sometimes been won in this way by the much celebrated famous warriors, that even in modern times a Japanese youth would often use this idiom in daily conversations. Sisera must be, therefore, either the poorest or the bravest in laying this 背水之陣.



Sun Tsu(孫子)\*, a much celebrated Chinese tactician, says in his book, in the division of "the Army on the March", that 絕水必遠水, being translated, "after crossing a river, you should get right far away from it." But Sisera did not! Again it is said, "camp in high places, not on high hills, but on knolls or hillocks elevated above the surrounding country." But to his discomfiture, Tabor was already occupied by Barak, and Sisera was prowling in the plain with the hill of Tabor on the front and the water at the back. The worst situation! Moreover, Sisera must have been spending tremendously to maintain his bulky army having nine hundred iron chariots and others. Sun Tsu says that "the expenditure at home and at the front, including entertainment of guests, small items such as glue and paint, and sums spent on chariots and armours, will reach the total of a thousand ounces of silver per day. Pity Sisera:

V. 19a

אִנְדָּל שֶׁל מִצְדָּה וְשֶׁל

Are long a dark spot

appeared in the sky gradually spreading its gruesome hands. Then all of sudden, a heavy rain was called forth in a flash of

\* 孫子兵法 (The Tactics of SunTsu): The oldest military treatise in the world, written in Chinese about 2400 years ago.



lightening. Rushing down the slope, gashing into the earth, the water flows down and is spilling over the banks of the torrents of Kishon. Should one expect an enemy at such a wretched time? Watching for the right time, Barak commanded, "March on!" Then, furious combats here and there: "The noise of the whip, and the noise of the rattling of wheels; and prancing horses, and the jumping chariots; the horseman mounting, and the flashing sword, and the glittering spear; and a multitude of slain: and a great heap of carcases; they stumble upon their corpses!" By the sudden, unexpected attack, Sisera's troops were miserably dispersed. It is not hard to imagine how they labored despairingly in driving away the heavy iron chariots in such deep mud. Sisera at last jumped down from the commander's chariot of honor, and pitiably fled on foot in vain to be slain by a Kenite woman. The tactics of both Sisera and Barak are not of the first class. Superficially, that of Sisera seems quite a menacing one, provided that the survey of the surroundings is not required. Israel, on the contrary, un- cleverly though they shut themselves up in the mountain, had this strongpoint that they were of one mind. The prevailing spirit in the Song is that this war was neither



of a clan or clans, nor of Israel even, but the war of Yahweh. This conjecture would be justified by the keynote of the contemporary song, "Bless ye Yahweh," Being single minded, to attack by stratagem is admirable tactics, though not always successful. The victory of Israel is justified by Sun Tzu in his saying that 上下同欲者必勝 being translated, "When one spirit penetrates the whole body, the victory is promised."





### CONCLUSION

The Song is rife with a number of problems as yet unsolved. There are still much room left for further research, some of it being nearly hopeless as to a definite conclusion. On the other hand, the Song is one of the most precious in Hebrew literature, which displays before our eyes the naive and spontaneous early Hebrew life. That the text suffered much more than other less significant portions of the Bible is only testimony to the fact that the Song encouraged the later Hebrews in their disappointments, and that they showed themselves such earnest readers as to make notes and glosses of their own, which were of course the best and the representative thoughts of those days, and which at last crept into the text. Though we cannot disclaim a great regret for the textual losses suffered, yet on the other hand, the losses only show how celebrated has been this Song ever since.



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